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Molokai to celebrate modern makahiki

Molokai's second annual modern makahiki, the only celebration of the ancient festival in the state, is set for Jan. 15 with school children asked to register ahead of time.

Prizes will go to all first-place winners of events, including ulu maika (bowling), Hawaiian wrestling (leg and arm) and huki-huki (tug of war).

The sports events at the Community Recreation Complex in Kaunakakai will be followed by free entertainment and a feast at no charge of stew and rice, pork adobo and fresh fish if available.

Eight people who call themselves the Ka Moloka'i Makahiki Committee have been planning the event since March 1982.

John Sabas, one of the founders of the celebration last year with Clayton Hee and Water Ritte, said its main purpose is to bring everybody together.

"Winning is secondary," he said. "If we can get people to talk to each other and contribute to each other's betterment, we feel we're successful."

Ritte added that the committee is applying ancient Hawaiian solutions to new problems through the modern Molokai Style Makahiki.

"Traditionally, the makahiki season is a time of peace," he explained. "In Molokai today, we have people split up. In the old days, we had gang wars. We want people to come together. Getting the school children involved is one way."

Budget chairman Ron Kimball said the celebration is being financed in part by a brisk sale of Ka Moloka'i Makahiki T-shirts which identify each of the four expanded ahupua'a (land divisions) on Molokai.

In ancient times, athletes from each ahupua'a competed against each other.

He said support has also come through a grant from the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts and from the Molokai Community Services Council, the Department of Education, Hawaiian Air Lines, KCCN Radio, Molokai Ranch, Kalua Koi Corp., Sheraton Molokai, the Chamber of Commerce and individuals.

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